



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 26 December 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
26 DECEMBER 1967

1. Laos

Communist forces are keeping up the military pressure. Yesterday they pulled off a hit-and-run raid on a government-held town in the central panhandle, destroying USAID and Air America facilities there. Government forces in the north were also under Communist pressure over the weekend.

2. Philippines

President Marcos

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on the progress of the continuing drive against the Huks. He got another encouraging report from the constabulary commander who told him of several new victories. The commander, incidentally, feels the morale of his forces has greatly improved in recent weeks because of Marcos' strong support.

3. Communist China

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4. Yemen

The Russians may be wondering why they ever let themselves get involved in the Yemeni civil war. Their republican clients continue doing poorly despite all the Soviet help they have been getting.

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5. Egypt

An affable, self-confident Nasir really extended himself when the new British ambassador presented credentials last week. He even agreed "in principle" to the British proposal that the southern end of the canal be unplugged to release the trapped ships. Nasir said he had already ordered his experts "urgently" to find out how to go about the job.

6. Czechoslovakia

The Czech party central committee was unable to resolve its business last week and is to reconvene on 3 January

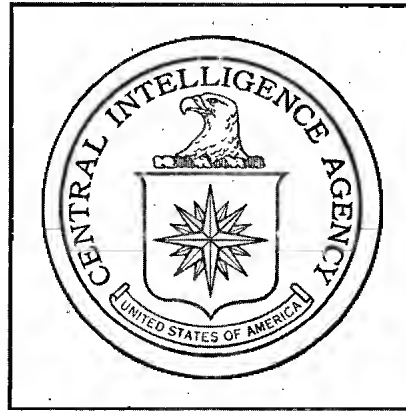
The general feeling in the Czech capital is that an intensive struggle continues on the leadership question and that the outcome is still anyone's guess.

7. Panama

Arnulfo Arias has been formally nominated for president by the most formidable coalition ever assembled in Panama's history. He looks like a sure bet in next May's election--if the voting is relatively free and honest.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Rejects President Johnson's "Five-Point Plan": The party Daily Nhan Dan charged yesterday that the President's proposal is a "worn-out trick" intended only to prolong the war. The paper went on to reiterate Hanoi's old terms for settlement of the war.

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Hanoi Says Ho is "Strong and Healthy": The North Vietnamese news agency went out of its way yesterday to try to refute rumors that Ho Chi Minh is seriously ill. It reported that Ho had appeared at a recent mass meeting and that "everyone felt extremely happy to see that their beloved leader is strong and healthy."

Ho himself is quoted telling the crowd that he feels "twenty years younger" than his 77 years. "Our line and policies are correct," he went on, "our entire people are united, and we are enjoying the firm support of friends in the five continents...this is why we will surely win and the US aggressors will surely be defeated." He used Secretary McNamara's resignation as evidence that "the US is being defeated." In concluding what Hanoi called a lengthy address, Ho expressed thanks to the Communist nations for their aid and to "the world people, including the progressive American people who are opposing the US imperialist aggressors and supporting the just fight of the Vietnamese people."

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Birthday Greetings to Mao Tse-tung: Hanoi radio reports that today's issue of Nhan Dan carries a front page photo of Ho and Mao shaking hands. Also front-paged is Ho's standard congratulatory message to Mao.

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Draft Dodging in North Vietnam:

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most young people in North Vietnam yearn for peace. The greatest fear of the young men is being drafted and sent South. They often try to avoid the draft by faking illness when they appear for their pre-induction physicals.

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the desertion of draftees from the training camps is becoming a real problem for the regime. The deserters usually do not get very far, however, because they are unable to produce their identity cards when accosted by the authorities.

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the North Vietnamese people have lost confidence in the party cadres because of their many unfulfilled promises.

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Mail Service in North Vietnam:

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mail service has been undependable since the first of this year and has gotten even worse in the past six months. Letters are often lost and the people, who now have no faith in the postal system, seldom write letters any more. ordinary citizens have received no mail from overseas since the first of 1967 and do not know whether the letters they have sent abroad have reached their destinations.

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North Vietnam Continues to Send Students Abroad:

A group of some 35 North Vietnamese students was observed earlier this month on a train traveling across Siberia toward Europe. They averaged about 20 years old and were about equally divided between men and women. They were destined for Budapest to study

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engineering and medicine [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

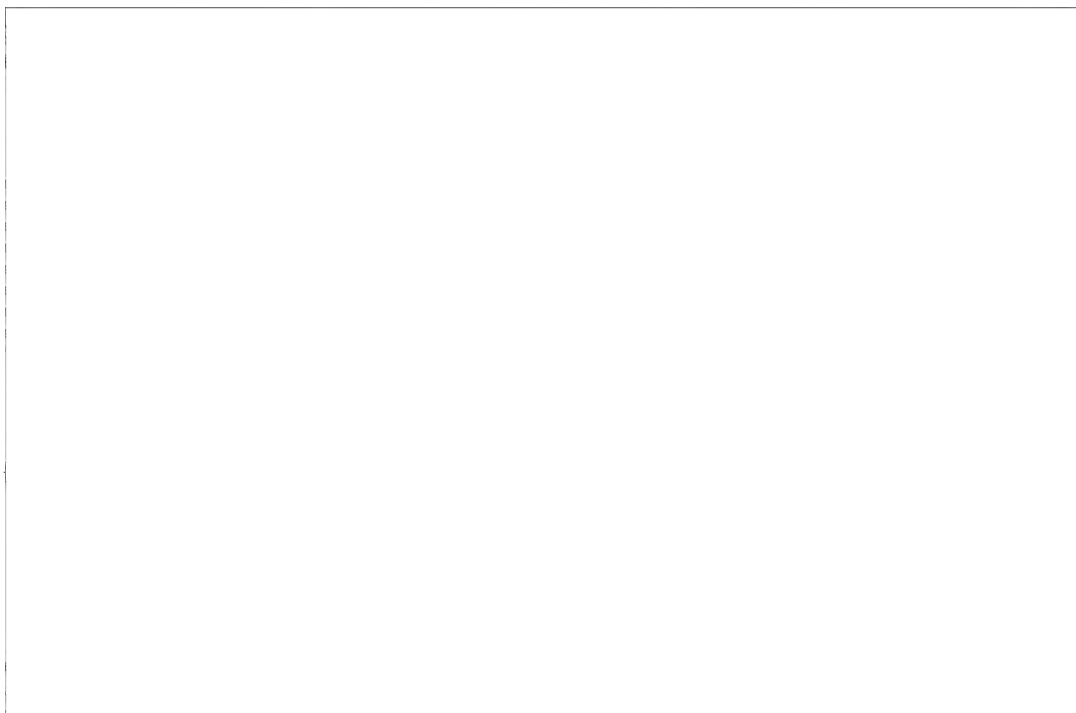
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This is one of a number of signs that Hanoi continues, even in the midst of war, to put a high premium on educating the next generation of leaders.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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